

STUDENTS AND PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Personal electronic devices are defined as anything other than the school-issued Chromebook, headphones, calculator or the like. Personal electronic devices include all “Internet-enabled devices” are defined as any smartphone, tablet, smartwatch, or other device capable of connecting to the internet and enabling the user to access content on the internet, including social media applications. However, these devices do not include any such device supplied by the agency for educational purposes.

Generally, the agency is not responsible for stolen, lost or damaged personal electronic devices brought to school.

Communication with Parents/Persons in Parental Relation

During the school day, to minimize distractions, parents/guardians may contact their children via the school office. Students may contact their parents by calling from the school's main office or the social worker's office.

Device Access and Storage

As required by Education Law §2803, this policy prohibits student use of internet-enabled devices during the school day (including all classes, homeroom periods, lunch, recess, study halls, and passing time) on school grounds (any building, structure, athletic playing field, playground, or land contained within the boundary of a school), unless under an exception (e.g., IEP/Section 504 or as permitted below).

1. At the elementary and middle school level, students are discouraged from bringing devices to school. Any device brought to school must be silenced and stored in the teacher's desk.
2. At the high school level, student devices must be silenced and must be stored in a locker or backpack for the entire school day.
3. Residential students should leave their phones in their dorm units.

Administrators and staff may also restrict use of electronic devices during school events and activities held outside of the school day and/or off school grounds.

Exceptions for Specific Purposes

Use of internet-enabled devices must be permitted where included in a student's Individualized Education Program, Section 504 plan, or where required by law. Additionally, the agency permits the use of internet-enabled devices in the event of an emergency, and under the following circumstances:

1. Where necessary to manage a student's healthcare (e.g., diabetes, asthma, medication, etc.);
2. For translation services; and/or
3. For students who are routinely responsible for the care and well-being of a family member (on a case-by-case basis, upon review and determination by a student's social worker).

Parents may request an exception for their children to use internet-enabled devices during the school day as listed above. Requests must be submitted to the School Principal, and for healthcare exceptions, must include documentation from a qualified healthcare professional.

Enforcement, Consequences and Reporting

Enforcement of this policy is chiefly the responsibility of the building administrative staff; however, all designated employees are expected to assist in enforcement. Students will be reminded of this policy regularly and consistently, especially at the start of the school year and after returning from breaks.

For students who are out of compliance with this policy, their device will be held in the school office until the end of the school day. The first time this happens, the student may retrieve the device, and the parent will be notified. For residential students, the device will be given to the Residential Administrator on duty.

Further instances will result in the device being held in the school office for longer periods of time. The agency still does not assume responsibility for loss or damage.

The goal is to provide a “distraction-free” environment for all students that is conducive to learning. One of Green Chimneys’ guiding principles is human-animal nature-based interactions. We encourage students to participate in outdoor, farm, garden, and other activities that make learning more interactive and engaging. Green Chimneys also has an instructional technology plan and utilizes the latest tech in the classroom to support learning, such as digital curriculum, Chromebook, smartboards, etc.

The agency may not impose suspension from school if the sole grounds for the suspension is that the student accessed an internet-enabled device as prohibited by this policy. However, the agency may utilize consequences under the agency’s Code of Conduct. The agency may also utilize assignments on the detrimental impact of social media on mental health, smartphones in school, or other relevant topics.

Some uses of personal electronic devices may constitute a violation of the school agency’s Code of Conduct or other agency policies, and in some instances, the law. The agency will cooperate with law enforcement officials as appropriate.

The agency is required to track data on incidents and will do so through the existing incident tracker system.

Electronic Devices and Testing

To ensure the integrity of testing, in accordance with state guidelines, students are not permitted to bring cell phones or other electronic devices into classrooms or other exam locations during all testing sessions.

Test proctors, monitors, and school officials have the right to collect cell phones and other prohibited electronic devices before the start of the test and to hold them for the duration of the test-taking time. Admission to the test will be prohibited to any student who has a cell phone or other electronic device in their possession and does not relinquish it.

Students with Individualized Education Plans, Section 504 Plans, or documentation from medical practitioners specifically requiring the use of electronic devices may do so as specified.

Policy Distribution and Translation

As required by law, the agency will post this policy under school policies on its website and reference this in the student handbook.

Residential Students are permitted to use phones when the privilege is allowed by the team, and the student and parent have reviewed and signed the electronics policy agreement.

Cross-references: Code of Conduct

Legal References: Education Law §2803